

Water Conservation Grant Program

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
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Introduction

The MassDEP's Water Conservation Grant Program awards funds to municipalities and public water systems to encourage and enhance local drinking water conservation efforts. Up to \$60,000 per proposal or a total of up to \$800,000 is expected to be awarded to eligible public water systems annually.

Qualified proposals will be selected on a competitive basis with priority given to those public water systems with Water Management Act permits or registrations that require meeting unaccounted-for water (UAW) or residential gallons per capita day (RGPCD) limits.

Eligible Projects

Project tasks/costs eligible for funding are listed below; however, all proposed projects that focus on drinking water conservation, loss identification, resolution, and prevention will be considered.

- Water Audits for the distribution and metering systems to balance the volume of drinking water produced with the volume billed and account for the remaining water (loss). Proposed audits may also include an evaluation of the various water metering systems to assure a higher level of accuracy in accounting for water usage. Proposed audits should use the guidance available on MassDEP's website, <http://www.mass.gov/dep/water/approvals/guidance.pdf>, or the American Water Works Association's methodology found in their manual of Water Audits and Leak Detection (M36).
- Leak Detection Surveys that include thorough documentation and a commitment to undertake leak repair work. Project proposals are encouraged to include leak detection survey work that includes customer water service lines.
- Water Rate Surveys for the purposes of establishing water rates to assure appropriate revenues to support maintenance needs and capital projects for improvements to the water works system. Proposed rate studies may also include a small-scale evaluation of capital needs to assure a higher degree of accuracy in setting conservation-based rates. Additionally, a water meter evaluation for development of a meter replacement program may be included with the rate study. Grantees should have conducted a water audit and leak detection survey within the previous two years prior to the implementation of a rate study or may conduct such as part of the proposed grant project.
- Water Conservation Outreach and Education Programs promoting awareness of the long-term economic and environmental benefits of water conservation, to include but not limited to; working with schools, producing local cable or newspaper announcements, distributing water conservation education information and low water use concepts to agricultural, commercial, industrial, and residential consumers. Billing stuffers should be avoided.
- Rebates for water conservation devices, retrofitting with efficient WaterSense labeled plumbing fixtures, and water efficient appliances (especially clothes washers).

Eligibility

- Proposed projects must provide a twenty-five percent (25%) match of the requested grant amount. In-kind services are eligible as a match.

- The direct recipient of the grant must be a public water system or municipality. Projects may be developed, carried out, and completed by non-governmental organizations (NGO's), regional planning agencies, consultants, etc. on behalf of the public water system.
- Leak detection survey projects must commit to follow-up repairs for detected leaks.
- Projects must provide an appropriate method for determining environmental results such as quantifying the water savings from leaks repaired, retrofits, etc.

Ineligible Projects/Expenses

- Land or conservation restriction purchases
- Offset feasibility studies
- Operation and Maintenance Expenses (i.e., calibrating meters)
- Capital Improvements (meters, pipes, valves, etc.)
- GIS related costs
- Vehicle purchase or expenses
- Office equipment purchases or travel expenses

Selection Criteria

1) Applications will be rated and evaluated on the basis of:

- Public water systems meeting required Water Management Act UAW or RGPCD limits.
- Public water systems with an identified problem(s) meeting demand, or have a significant environmental concern reflected via WMA permit conditions that would benefit by a reduction in demand.
- Water Supply Emergency Declaration - the public water system is operating under a MassDEP declared Water Emergency Declaration.
- Proposed Projects Measures of Success - ability of project impact to be quantified in gallons of water and dollars saved over the course of a year.
- Public water systems with existing water loss prevention and conservation programs and policies (for example; budget line-items supporting annual leak detection surveys, a written meter replacement policy, or a written leak repair policy that reflects the State guidance).
- Proposals that provide evidence that the public water system commits to calibrating source water venturi metering systems twice a year and conform to American Water Works Association calibration and replacement standards for other in-line metering systems to ensure the accuracy of recording of water volumes.

Additional selection weight will be provided for public water systems that outline in existing annual budgets water audits, leak detection and repair work, water meter replacement, and other water conservation type work.

Additional selection weight will be also be provided for those systems performing a detailed water audit in compliance with the American Water Works Association - M36 Water Audits and Leak Detection manual.

2) Project proposals should:

- Planning - be in compliance with long term planning efforts.
- Public Health - support public health by ensuring promotion of projects that maximize the protection of public health.
- Implementation clearly describe how the project will be carried out including: methodology, personnel, time lines, and entities that will complete the outlined project tasks, and detail the level of commitment for repair of detected leaks.
- Sustainability - proposal is linked to long term drinking water conservation goals and standards established by the Water Resources Commission and MassDEP. These can be accessed at http://www.mass.gov/envir/mwrc/pdf/Conservation_Standards.pdf

- Existing Efforts - proposal supports ongoing or planned educational efforts, water audits, leak detection surveys, repairs, full cost pricing, etc.
- Budget - costs should be reasonable for the tasks identified; the required 25% match is documented.
- Comprehensive Projects - proposal could include a combination of eligible project tasks outlined in this request for proposals.
- Projects that incorporate a watershed approach to identify and reduce water loss.
- Pricing policies that strongly encourage water conservation

Application Process

This program year, the Water Conservation Grant Program will post a Request for Response (RFR) and related information on the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Procurement Assessment Solicitation System Web site (<http://www.comm-pass.com>). Competitive applications must respond to the RFR's project goals, eligibility requirements, and evaluation criteria.

Background

The Water Conservation Grant Program will award funds to municipalities and public water systems to encourage and enhance local drinking water conservation efforts. Federal and/or state funds provide monies for this grant program in support of the Massachusetts Water Resources Commission and MassDEP watershed management policies and water conservation initiatives, as well as the Massachusetts Water Policy developed through the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs.

Information:

Water Audit Guidance: www.mass.gov/dep/water/approvals/guidance.pdf

Water Pricing Information: www.epa.gov/waterinfrastructure/pricing/index.htm

Grant Matching: www.mass.gov/dep/water/wcgmach.htm

Water Conservation Goals: www.mass.gov/envir/mwrc/pdf/Conservation_Standards.pdf

Procurement Assessment Solicitation System: www.comm-pass.com

Example of Past Projects: www.mass.gov/dep/water/wlp05sum.pdf

For more information about this grant program contact the following MassDEP staff:

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This information is available in alternate format upon request by contacting the ADA Coordinator at 617-574-6872.

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